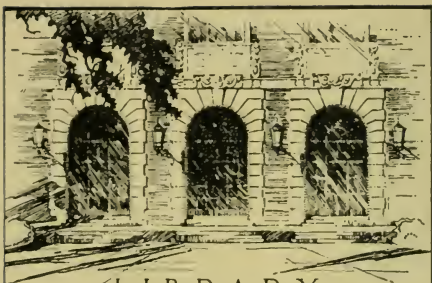


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THE
HOUSE OF LANCASTER,

OR,

The Story of AP THOMAS.

AN

HISTORICAL NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

How fierce a fiend is passion!
With what wildness, what tyranny untamed,
It reigns in woman. Unhappy sex!
Whose easy yielding temper, gives way
To every appetite alike. And love
In their weak bosoms is a rage
As powerful as hate and as destructive.

ROWE

VOL. II.

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CHAP. I.

AR THOMAS, though conscious of his innocence, could not suppress a violent agitation which had seized his frame, but when he reflected on the justness of his cause, and the presence of his brother, he boldly proceeded.

VOL. II.

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When they arrived, and, were ushered into the apartment of the King, they were much surprized to find there the Queen, and Caroline.

That young beauty, having heard of the disturbance of which her picture had been the cause, determined to declare the whole mystery of that adventure in the presence of his Majesty.

But before she proceeded to explain herself, she intreated the King to send for ap Thomas, and was extremely pleased that his brother appeared with him to be a witness of what she was about to say.

The furious Elizabeth, who still

thought ap Thomas was the lover, was in the utmost despair, that she could not possibly avoid this unforeseen blow.

She feared, that, in spite of her artifices, the King would immediately join the hands of these lovers.

While her invidious mind was labouring under these racking thoughts, Caroline, addressing her in a most respectful manner, begged the return of her picture.

With this request the Queen could not refuse to comply, and immediately returned it; upon which the amiable Caroline, turning towards Charles, and presenting him the miniature, said, with a degree of firm-

ness, which appeared incompatible with her nature,

“ A second time I present you this picture, as a pledge of the sincerest affection, and I have only to add, that you will be more careful of my gifts than you have hitherto been.”

Charles received it on his knees, and after kissing the hand which presented it, he said—

“ This kindness is more than I deserve, but you are all goodness, and forgive my carelessness, which has been the cause of so much unhappiness.

“ Any present from you, lady,

would be deemed by me invaluable, but when that present is your own picture, and given in the presence of our august Sovereign and his Consort, it gives it, if possible, a higher value, and makes me declare that never with life will I part from it."

The kind Caroline listened with a degree of sweetness, that enraptured the happy Charles, and thanked him with a smile of the most ineffable sweetness.

She then, with a degree of modesty, which charmed every beholder, related to his Majesty and the Queen, the decided partiality that she felt for Charles above all her other suitors.

This public declaration evidently gave her pain, but when she considered that it would be the means of acquitting Reuben of the charge that had been brought against him, she hesitated not a moment.

Henry was so highly satisfied at the unravelling of that adventure, that he gave orders for the speedy celebration of their nuptials; and that the happy Charles might be a suitable match for a lady of Caroline's fortune, he gave him a very considerable post then vacant.

Nor did he forget to lay his absolute commands upon Lord Merenton, never to attempt to disturb the tranquillity of that happy pair, who, a few days after, were united in the

bonds of wedlock, with great splendour, and general applause.

In the meanwhile, the Queen found the agitations of her breast hourly increase ; for, notwithstanding her jealousy of Caroline was calmed, yet, as she must needs have an object upon which to vent her fury, her restlessness still augmented.

She had given an account to Lady Lichfield, of all the particulars of an event so contrary to her pernicious designs, and they were entertaining their imagination with new ideas, and past projects, to disturb the happiness of ap Thomas.

The King, after having made many serious reflections upon the late

incident, was utterly at a loss to comprehend how ap Thomas came to have the miniature of Caroline in his possession.

Henry was of an easy, credulous, and diffident temper, and, consequently, was susceptible of any impression.

This character naturally rendered him wavering and uncertain in his thoughts, especially in an affair of such obscenity, as were the accusations which has been charged upon ap Thomas.

To clear up the doubts which agitated his restless mind, he sent for Reuben, who immediately obeyed the summons.

“ Ap Thomas,” said his Majesty, as he entered the apartment, “ sit you down, and answer me truly to the question I am about to propose to you—Wait till I have put the question.

“ I know what you are going to say—‘ that I have no reason to think you would speak an untruth.’

“ That’s true, but *my* caution is very salutary, and perhaps necessary, notwithstanding.

“ There is not a man at Court that I have more respect for, than I have for you, ap Thomas, or one whose word I would give more credit to.”

Reuben bowed.

“Nay, I flatter you not—Now tell me honestly how you came in the possession of Caroline Montgomery’s picture.”

“I can only say, your Majesty, that, I am positive that I did not bring it to the palace with me; I will not attempt to surmise, who could be guilty of so base an action, as to clandestinely force it on me, but conclude solemnly, assuring your Majesty, that till the Queen held it up with a smile, I knew not that I was in possession of such a thing.”

The King appeared perfectly satisfied with this answer and held out his hand to ap Thomas, as a token of his friendship.

Reuben bent the knee, and imprinted on it a fervent kiss; he then took a seat near his Majesty, and continued his narrative.

CHAP. II

CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORY OF
AP THOMAS.

“ BEING released from our perilous voyage, we staid no longer on board than was necessary to collect our baggage; but immediately commenced our journey towards the capital, where we arrived on the second day.

“ Charles was about to invade Italy, and I determined, as soon as I had settled your Majesty’s affair, to obtain some post in the army of the King of France.

“ The intermediate time was spent by me in the most deplorable despair.

“ Paris, so famed for the beauty of its structure, and for the prodigious concourse of people continually flocking thither from all parts of the globe, appeared in my eyes no other than a frightful desert.

“ Notwithstanding all the pleasures with which it abounds, I was charmed with the order Charles sent me to prepare for my departure towards my

native country, with the tribute due to your Majesty.

“ I was transported with joy at the thought of an opportunity of once more approaching the cause of my uneasiness ; and, notwithstanding I was sure of finding her in the possession of my too happy rival, I should, however, have the satisfaction, I hoped, of seeing her happy.

“ During my stay here, I had, several times, seen the object of my fruitless adoration.

“ A charming langour, which, I fancied, I observed in her beautiful eyes, most agreeably flattered my passion.

“ Notwithstanding I had not once had an opportunity of speaking a word to her but in public, my tenderness took advantage of the trouble and agitation which reigned in her discourse.

“ How unjust, how inhuman, does love render us.

“ My heart sought consolation under its tortures from the flattering hopes of seeing her partake of my misfortunes.

“ I now made ready to depart from Paris, determining to drown the thoughts of love, in the din of war.

“ Lord Murray determined to accompany me, though much dissuaded from it by his lovely consort.

“By an effort of my passion, I attached myself to my rival, finding a kind of satisfaction in sacrificing my jealousy for the sake of the adorable person to whom he was united.

“But Murray’s shining merit, and his friendship for me, soon compelled me to do by inclination and duty, what, at first, I only did through a nicety of punctilio.

“In about a week from our departure from hence we arrived at the head quarters of the King of France ; I obtained a command under Lord Murray, and, I was well pleased at having such a commander, as I knew him to be a man of tried courage.

“ The army decamped from their quarters in the month of July and proceeded towards Lyons; after staying there some time, we marched for Grenoble; from thence we repaired to Ast; we had been there but a short time when the young monarch was seized with the small pox, a circumstance at which we were much alarmed, for fear of bad consequences resulting from it.

“ However in shorter time than we expected he recovered, and began to defile his forces into Italy.

“ That part of the army to which Lord Murray and I were attached was sent in advance, to dislodge a small body of troops posted in ambush, and which our scouts had discovered.

“In effect, we found them there, but far superior in force to what we had been led to expect, that we were doubtful of our numbers and courage united, would be able to execute the command; but, our gallant leaders would not let us long deliberate on the disproportion of strength, and we fell on them with an ardour, which, in appearance promised soon to remove the obstruction.

“Lord Murray distinguished himself in a very advantageous manner; but his horse being killed under him, he was on the point of being overpowered by numbers, and had infallibly lost his life, had not the idea of the promise I had made to Lady Murray flashed across my mind and

spurred me on to the preservation of the life of that happy Lord.

“ I rushed into the midst of the enemy, and came in time to save him. Murray, after I had so seasonably released him, redoubled his efforts, and the enemy was soon after dispersed.

“ We had to encounter with no more enemies in our progress from thence to Turin ; but we were then reduced to as great a dilemma, for Charles found we were quite exhausted, and he was obliged to borrow the jewels of the Duchess of Savoy ; and at Cassel the Marchioness of Montferrat did him the like favour ; these supplies enabled us to press on towards Pavia.

“ We entered Florence without any resistance being offered, and having presented such terms to the Florentine as his circumstances required, and under which their situation obliged them to acquiesce, he proceeded to Rome ; he entered that city as a conqueror, at the head of his army, by torch light, on the last night of the year.

“ He compelled the Pope to sign a treaty, by which he surrendered several strong places into the King’s hand.

“ After having staid there a month we broke up, and proceeded for Naples ; Ferdinand the reigning monarch was unable to make any resistance.

“ The latter end of February found us entering the city, as we had done Rome, in triumph, and a short time after Charles was saluted King.

“ Being at the end of his conquests he gave himself up to the pleasure that reigned in the city ; far different were the occupations of his enemies, they were busied in collecting an army to bar up his passage back to his own territories.

“ The confederate Princes assembled an army of forty thousand men, commanded by Francis Márquis of Mantua, and they waited for us in the valley of Fornoner, into which he descended with the whole of his army.

“ On the sixth of July we attacked them ; it was a bloody engagement, and in this encounter Lord Murray received his mortal wound.

“ He fell from his horse, and had unavoidably fallen in the enemy's hands, had not the despair in which I was, to behold that generous warrior in such deplorable circumstances, given me strength enough, to get him up upon my horse.

“ Fully intent upon the preservation of his life, I heeded not the many efforts which were made by the enemy to compel me to relinquish my burthen, but spurring on my horse we soon left them behind, and arrived at a place of safety.

“I felt happy, in having had it twice in my power to be of so material a service to him—twice I had saved his life, and though I would have done the same for any of my fellow soldiers, yet I felt supremely rejoiced that I had saved the life of Caroline’s husband.”

CHAP. III.

“ My chief aim was to carry him to a surgeon, who after having put him to bed, examined his wound in my presence.

“ The surgeon gave me not the slightest hope, and your Majesty may conceive how I must have been shocked, when the surgeon after a short time pronounced his wounds mortal.

“I employed the little time he had to live in giving him such proofs of my friendship as he might expect in his present melancholy circumstances.

“I beheld him hastening towards his end with a firmness of mind, which expressed the greatness of his courage and resolution ; my grief touched without daunting him, and he incessantly repeated, that he would carry with him to the grave, an extreme and grateful acknowledgement of my obliging friendship.

“The surgeon then with great delicacy and feeling, and with a humanity that did him credit, tenderly informed his Lordship that if he had any worldly affairs to settle, he would recommend them

to be done as soon as possible, as it was his firm opinion that his lordship would not live above a few hours.

“ This intelligence afflicted me more than it seemed to do Lord Murray, and my consternation was as great as if I had not had any reason to have expected it.

“ As for Lord Murray, looking on me with eyes sedate and full of tranquillity he said,

“ My dear ap Thomas, grieve not for me. It is a blow I was prepared for, and do not add to my sufferings by unavailing regrets, but rather let us make the best use we can of the few moments I have to live.

“ After this calling for pen, ink and paper, he was some time occupied in composing a letter for Lady Murray.

“ With what reflection were my thoughts agitated during that interval! I flattered myself, that the generous Murray would acquaint his lady, of what I had done for him, and by that means would engage her to make me some acknowledgement; but I soon again banished from my imagination those flattering ideas.

“ I had bound myself under an obligation to her, either to lose my life, or return her illustrious consort safe to her embraces.

“ ‘ What will she not surmise ?

thought I, 'she will perhaps, suspect, that my jealousy prevented me from giving him what assistance I might have done, and induced me unworthily to desert my charge in the moments of danger.

“ ‘But whither am I wandering? accusing my Caroline of baseness that I am convinced she is incapable of!

“ ‘She knows my heart too well, she knows that if human power can save him, with me he would be safe, and that I would cheerfully lay down my life to preserve his, if it would contribute to her happiness.

“ ‘Forgive me then thou angel purity, in daring for a moment to entertain

doubts so unfeeling of thee, so disgraceful, and which thou art every way so undeserving.

“ I was occupied with these racking reflections, when Murray, having finished his letter, called to me, and, when he had sealed it, desired me to make every person withdraw; when, bidding me sit down by him upon the bed, he made me swear by all that I held most sacred that I would deliver to Lady Murray without attempting to open it, that letter, which he at the same time, put into my hands.

“ I, without hesitation promised all he desired.—Lord Murray then with great difficulty proceeded.

“ “ I am too well satisfied of your

integrity, ap Thomas' said he, 'to remain a moment in doubt of your violating what you promise, and shall, therefore, make no scruple of freely explaining my mind to you.

“ ‘Know then, that I have, a long time, perceived your passion for Lady Murray; a lover's eyes are too clear not to penetrate into the deepest mysteries.

“ ‘I was no stranger to the tenderness you bore to her while single, nor to your respectful regards towards her, after she became Lady Murray.

“ ‘You may, likewise call to mind, that I could not avoid hinting to you something to that purpose, when you gave me that timely assistance against my two murderous rivals.

“ ‘Since that time, notwithstanding the caution with which you have conducted yourself, your eyes have betrayed you, and your passionate, though awful respect, has given me more disquiet than the tenderest declarations would have done.

“ ‘ In effect, I had reason to be apprehensive of it : she is not ungrateful; she loves you, ap Thomas; and though she has never deviated from her character, or duty, yet all my love, all my assiduity, have gained no ground against her first inclinations.

“ ‘ I endeavoured to hate you, as the sole obstacle to my complete happiness, and I imagined you had the same sentiments towards me; but you have forced me to love a rival who

triumphs over the last part of my conquest; and the delicacy of your passion giving you an inviolable attachment for Lady Murray, you have sacrificed your hatred to the violence of your love.

“ ‘ You deserve to be happy; and the nobleness of your sentiments merits a heart entirely free and disengaged.

“ ‘ She will, undoubtedly, repair the injustice of destiny, and will for me, acquit herself of the essential obligation I owe to you.

“ ‘ I can scarcely proceed—But oh! ap Thomas disregard not what I have said. May you be as happy with Lady Murray as you deserve to be.

“ ‘ And now, let me, return you my sincere and heartfelt thanks for those repeated acts of tenderness I have received from you, and to assure you that the greatest proof of my gratitude, for the services you have rendered, is my wishing you, to become the husband of Lady Murray.

“ ‘ And, oh ! could I have beheld her once more, to receive from her lips a parting blessing, I should die most happy.

“ ‘ Tell her, that I—Oh ! my Caroline—Could I but once have—Oh !

“ Here his speech failed him, he sank in my arms and almost instantly expired.

“ Thus died a man whom every one respected and admired. A tender father, an affectionate husband, and a sincere friend ; a lover of his country, and a faithful servant to his king.

“ Your Majesty I am sure will pardon me for this humble panegyric to the memory of so good a man.

“ It is utterly impossible for me to express the extremity of grief into which I was plunged ; I however neglected nothing to render Lord Murray, after his death, all that was due to his rank, merit, and illustrious birth ; after all which, I joined the army to march into France.

“ I staid a month at Paris, to settle

my own affairs, and then commenced my journey towards England.

“ How long, how tedious, did I think the journey, notwithstanding I still feared to present myself before Lady Murray.

“ ‘ With what an eye will she receive me,’ said I to myself, ‘ I, perhaps, carry my condemnation inclosed in the deceased Lord’s letter.

“ ‘ Ah ! it is, doubtless, in my prejudice, since with such precautions he forbade me to open it ; that care but too plainly denounces to me, that he enjoins her to see me no more !

“ I protest, my Sire, that these so natural [reflections a thousand times

pressed me to penetrate into that dreadful mystery.

“ Who can divulge this breach of faith,” said I, every moment ; “ let me for ever conceal from that lady’s eyes the last injunctions of her Lord ! By this means I may probably evade the most dreadful misfortune which can possibly attend my future days.”

“ Notwithstanding all this, Sire, I withstood a curiosity which would have been injurious to the character of a man of probity.

“ At last I arrived at court fully determined to expose myself to whatever my fate had allotted for me.

“ I had the honour of presenting

myself before your majesty ; you received me with your usual goodness, and had the condescension to give me to understand, you were perfectly satisfied with my care towards the deceased Lord Murray.

“ It was a considerable time before I could have a particular audience of the disconsolate Lady Murray ; and, at last, in order to obtain it, I was obliged to send her word, that her lord, in his last moments, had entrusted me with a letter for her, with express orders to deliver it only into her own hands.

“ This induced her to grant me an audience. I found her overwhelmed with sorrow, which redoubled my own; nay, it seemed as if the sight

of me, augmented the bitterness of her grief.

“ ‘ Ap Thomas,’ said she, (after some moments silence, her words rendered almost inarticulate by grief) ‘ you have not been able to execute what you so generously resolved !

“ ‘ In spite of my vows, and your care, Lord Murray is ‘no more ! I, however, render you the justice to believe, that you are not insensible for his loss.

“ ‘ No, you have given proofs to the contrary, the remembrance whereof I shall always think upon with gratitude.’

“ ‘ My recompence, is too great,

Madam,' interrupted I, ' since you condescend to call to mind the feeble marks of my duty, which I rendered to that illustrious Lord; but, alas ! how fearful am I of having brought you, in this letter, orders fatal and destructive to my life's repose !'

" Upon this, trembling in every joint, I related to her the last discourse I had had with Lord Murray.

" I painted out to her the racking disquiet I felt upon account of the letter I had to deliver her, and presented it to her almost expiring with apprehensions.

" She appeared satisfied with my fidelity and resignation, and to give

me a proof thereof, she signified her intention of reading his lordship's letter aloud, which, for the exquisite pleasure and happiness they promised, and have since procured me, are deeply engrafted on my memory.

CHAP. IV.

"LADY MURRAY was greatly agitated. At length she assumed a degree of composure and read aloud, as follows.

"I shall see you no more, my dearest Caroline! Death is about to deprive me of nature's rarest treasure, and allows me only time to acquaint

you with my reluctance or rather despair, and with the last proof of love which I exact from you.

“ ‘ Ap Thomas will deliver you this; I owe him more than *I* can ever repay, and it is to *you* I leave the care of recompensing him.

“ ‘ He loves you; I had the penetration to discern it; and, notwithstanding virtue and duty shut your eyes against his passion, your heart was never insensible to his tenderness.

“ ‘ This generous man has omitted nothing to express his ardour; it is I alone who have received vivid proofs of its violence, whilst he sighed in secret.

“ ‘But, if his generosity has out-
vied me during my life, suffer me to
triumph over him after my decease.

“ ‘Unite yourself to ap Thomas
with everlasting and inviolable bonds;
he is worthy of this happiness; re-
fuse not to yield to the passion of
a most faithful lover, and to the
earnest intreaties of an expiring hus-
band.

“ ‘Adieu, my dear Caroline; I feel
the hand of death approaches! Do
not forget me; I am fully sensible
of my exquisite felicity by the inex-
pressible torture I feel at parting
with it.

“ Judge, Sire, what was my sur-
prise at hearing that letter read; the

happiness it decreed me appeared so extraordinary, that I was for a length of time in suspense, if what I had heard was real.

“ ‘ Good Heaven !’ cried I, at length, ‘ could the loss of a thousand lives merit a recompence so glorious ! Ah ! amiable Murray, thy virtue was uncommon.’

“ In the mean-while Lady Murray, her eyes fixed on the ground, remained in profound silence, nor durst I interrupt her ; fear, awe, and respect, restrained my impatience.

“ At length, casting her eyes upon me, her cheeks bedewed with tears.

“ ‘ Ap Thomas,’ said she, ‘ by how

much the more my unfortunate Lord expresses his acknowledgements to you, by so much I am the more sensible of what I owe to his memory, and of what I owe to myself.

“ ‘ Let it suffice you to know, that you merit, even in my opinion, all that Lord Murray has destined for you ; but, have the generosity not to press me for the execution of an injunction of what must wound my character, though I cannot deny but that, in some manner, it flatters my inclination.

“ ‘ Content yourself with the most perfect esteem, and suffer me, uninterrupted, to weep the loss of my illustrious husband.’

“ ‘ Yes, Madam,’ answered I, ‘ it is not reasonable that you should ever forget the untimely end of Lord Murray.

“ ‘ He well deserved your tears; and how glorious and desirable soever is the fortune he generously designed me, I shall not attempt to obstruct a sorrow so justly grounded.

“ ‘ My respect, and my profound submission shall, alone, put you in mind of my love for you, and of his bounty and generosity to me.

“ ‘ The happiness which shall be destined me by way of acknowledgement, or gratitude, I will not owe to any thing, but to the constancy, and perseverance of my passion; from

that, alone, Madam, it is that I hope to find a change in your sentiments, and by obeying the dying injunctions of Lord Murray, make happy the man who has so long adored you.'

" ' Withdraw, ap Thomas,' said she, ' retire; I must not hear you any longer: your submissive resignation, will stagger those resolutions which my character ought to maintain.'

" ' I obey—but let me assure you, my dear Lady Murray, that no one feels more keenly the loss of your husband, than myself. He was a sincere and tried friend to me.

" ' Can I then cease to mourn for his loss? Can I cease to remember

the kindness I have invariably received from his Lordship, and his extreme generosity, in giving to me (as far as in him lay) so rich a treasure as your lovely self.

“ ‘ Pardon me, Lady, if the excess of my passion should lead me to speak improperly. I would not wish to wound your feelings, but before I relinquish the thoughts of realizing your deceased Lord’s wishes, I hope you will not be offended at my freedom, if I presume to offer a few remarks on a speech you have just made.

“ ‘ Dear Lady, you have been pleased to confess that I merit all that Lord Murray had destined for me.’

“ ‘ How can I hear those words from your lips, and yet content myself with possessing your esteem.

“ ‘ Nor do I see, dear lady, pardon my boldness, how you can “wound your character,” by obeying the dying injunctions of your husband, when they are in unison with your own feelings, as you have just now kindly confessed.

“ ‘ I know I am too presumptuous in offering these remarks, but as they are the effusions of a heart who has so long, and so sincerely adored you, I am convinced you will rather attribute them to that source, than from any wish to offend.

“ ‘ I take my leave. I see, Lady, you feel embarrassed. I will not therefore press this subject farther at present; but, I shall presume to hope that you will consider the subject again, that the happiness of the man who adores you is at stake, and whatever may be your decision—to that I must submit.’ ”

“ As I uttered these words, she made a sign to me to leave her, and I departed, divided between hope and fear.

“ I had never presumed to aspire so high, as to that state of earthly bliss with which Lord Murray's letter flattered my imagination.”

“ I filled my soul with ideas a

thousand times beyond what I ought to hope for.

“ What different changes of mind can love produce ! Before the reading of that letter, I believed myself lost for ever ; after I had heard its contents, I imagined myself within sight of being the happiest of men.

“ Several months passed, during which, an awful and silent respect was my sole mediator ; and, notwithstanding I presented myself before that adorable woman, as frequently as possible, I yet affected not to seem desirous of having any particular conversation with her.

“ This prudent conduct, I fancied, would plead my passion better than

the most pressing arguments could have done, and, in effect, I was not deceived in my conjectures, for I soon found it had made an impression upon Lady Murray.

“ Perceiving me, one day, leaning against a window, with my eyes intently fixed on her—

“ ‘ How much,’ said she, approaching me, ‘ is your silence to be feared ! I am but too sensible of what respect and passion it conceals ; the tenderest expressions would certainly have less effect upon me.

“ ‘ But, my dear ap Thomas, besides the general reasons which decency imposes on me, the jealousy with which you had inspired Lord

Murray causes in me certain scruples which wound my nicety.'

" ' Madam,' replied I, oppressed with grief; ' I will not oppose to your sovereign laws ought but an implicit submission : and how cruel and rigorous soever it appear to me, without the least visible repugnance I will sacrifice my life to give you proof of the unfeigned deference I have for you.'

" With these words, I made my obeisance and departed.

" After this conference Lady Murray affected to be still more retired than ever, and insensibly accustomed herself to solitude.

" She has since avowed to me, that

her lord's letter had exposed her to many violent conflicts within herself; and that, at last being no longer able to flatter herself with the hopes of resisting the inclination she had for me, she thought that absence alone could succour her on this occasion.

“ ‘In effect, sire, she retired into the country, a few days after, and her departure was so precipitate, that I had not the least notice of it.

“ ‘This, her leaving me, which I thought wholly causeless, plunged me into great anxiety.

“ ‘ ‘Alas ! without doubt,’ cried I, her heart is not only repugnant to the last request of her expiring

lord, but she likewise flies the sight of a faithful adorer, whose looks she thinks would incessantly reproach her for her ingratitude !'

CHAP. V.

“ I remained some days sinking under these insupportable ideas, when, at last, no longer able to bear up against the racking tortures they caused in my soul, I took a resolution to seek Lady Murray, to obtain either her consent, or refusal, and put an end to the doubts which so cruelly tortured me.

“ Being thus determined, I departed and went to her country seat. She was then in her garden ; and to avoid giving her notice of my arrival, I hastened thither.

“ I found her sitting, alone, by the side of a fountain, whose agreeable murmuring, as it burst on the ear, excited that sweet thought fulness, which can only be conceived by a heart devoted, as was Lady Murray’s, to piety.

“ As soon as she saw me, she could not prevent her lovely countenance from being suffused with blushes.

“ ‘ Ah, ap Thomas !’ exclaimed, she, ‘ what do you here ? Have you already forgotten my duty, and your

own promises ? For, in a word, the regard I have for you, cannot so far blind me as to make me hope, that I shall ever be able to fulfil my deceased husband's desires ?

“ What will the world say ? I shall be justly taxed with having counterfeited a husband's injunctions purely as a pretext to countenance the dictates of my own inclinations.

“ Though our hearts are made to love each other, our conditions are unequal.

“ I endeavoured to fly you to defend and fortify myself, both against you and against myself ; yet love conducts you hither to weaken such just and reasonable resolutions ; pity me,

my dear ap Thomas, have compassion on me ! and, if you are truly generous, suffer not that inglorious weakness to dishonour me in the eyes of the world.

“ ‘ Dear Lady Murray,’ interrupted I, ‘ heaven is my witness, that your honour, your glory, and your character, are no less dear to me, than they are to yourself; and notwithstanding the violence of my love infinitely surpasses an ordinary passion, I desire no happiness at the price of your repose.

“ ‘ I shall not, therefore, to maintain my claims to your heart, alledge either the ardent passion I have always had for you, nor the peremptory law of an expiring husband’s last request; that

generous man has more than over paid me for all the obligations, by the sole idea or a hope so glorious as the enjoyment of what he designed me.

“ ‘ Permit me, therefore, rigid, yet prudent lady, to die in adoring you ; that is the only felicity I have remaining : continue to sustain the lustre of your high rank : as for me, I should think myself but too happy, if, by my death, I could any wise contribute to your happiness.’ ”

“ ‘ Ah !’ cried Lady Murray, after a short silence ; ‘ it is too much ! you triumph ! reason is too weak to encounter with such ardent love, and such submission ! Well, ap Thomas, I will make you happy : I shall have at least for my apology and defence,

the commands of a dying husband, and the tenderness of the most perfect, and the most faithful of lovers.

“ But, let us conceal from the world an union which may be condemned. Here, receive my hand as a pledge of the happiness which I promise you.

“ It is quite out of my power, my liege to represent to you what I felt at that enchanting assurance of my felicity.

“ I passed so suddenly from the darkest extremity of sorrow, to the most sensible excess of joy, that the transition had near cost me my life.

“ I cast myself at her feet, and there, by the most lively transports, I ex-

pressed to her part of the pleasure with which my heart was agitated.

“We, afterwards, agreed together on the measures we should adopt, and the conduct we were to observe to keep secret from the world our intended marriage.

“I took my leave and returned to London, after I had received permission to come sometimes to visit her, and with the same precaution, until the happy moment in which, her time of mourning being at an end, she was in a condition to become mine for ever.

“Your Majesty may well imagine that I took advantage of the leave granted me. How sweet, by the

charms of her wit, and the noble and generous sentiments of her soul, did I find the conversations I, from time to time, had with her.'

"What reasons, what motives to redouble my passion, had it not been long since, at the highest pitch it could possibly arrive. In so much, that my condition was such, that the happiest of mortals might have envied my felicity.

"In short, that wished for minute arrived; when I was to be advanced to the highest summit of earthly glory.

"I privately repaired to her mansion; and before she would engage herself to me for ever, she exacted from me the most inviolable oaths to conceal, with

the utmost care the happiness I was about to enjoy.

“ This secret was of such importance to her, that, she would not impart it to any of her most faithful and favorite female attendants; and in her own private chapel, an unknown priest joined us to each other in sweet and sacred bonds.

“ The exstacy I was in to find myself possessed of so invaluable a blessing, is hardly to be conceived.

“ I was so intoxicated with my state of bliss, that I often believed that to be some flattering illusion, which, in effect, was an enchanting reality.

“ My dear Caroline gave me the key

to one of the gates of her garden, in order to prevent my being seen by her domestics.

“ I was received by her in a ground closet adjoining to her apartments, and which looked into the garden. None of her women were ever suffered to enter into it; and a little dog, which she took care to keep shut therein, by the noise he made, gave her notice, every evening, of my arrival.

“ Thus I enjoyed, without interruption or disquiet, the unspeakable happiness of so sweet an union.

“ Nothing can be added to my felicity; I love as tenderly as I am beloved; I taste the pleasure of keep-

ing the most agreeable secret in the world; nor should any consideration upon earth have induced me to reveal it, had not the ill grounded suspicions of the Queen troubled your Majesty's tranquillity of mind, and, upon account of the inviolable attachment I have to your Majesty, forcibly compelled me to trust you with a secret upon which depends the repose of my life.

“ I should be apprehensive of its being in danger, had not your Majesty, by the most sacred oaths, made me easy upon a matter of so great importance to me; for I once more repeat, that the life of Caroline, and my own, are absolutely attached to the observance of your promise.”

CHAP. V.

As THOMAS having finished his narrative, the King, who had listened to it with great satisfaction and attention, no sooner perceived that he had done speaking, but, in a most courteous manner, he expressed the pleasure he had received in his discourse.

“ Far from blaming Lady Murray,” said he, “ I cannot but approve of her choice: A lover so ardent and attentive in all respects as yourself, certainly merits the heart of the most deserving lady: besides, her husband’s injunction authorizes her choice.

“ How happy are you! You taste all the sweet delights of love! You have forgotten all its past torments; and what, in my opinion, renders you a still more happy pair, that, since the time of your union, you have both, by your mutual endeavours to make each other happy, ensured a state of earthly bliss, very rarely to be met with.”

“ Ah, my Sire,” interrupted ap Thomas, smiling, “ the affection your

Majesty has for the Queen, is a clear evidence that this maxim is not general; even if it is true, that some husbands may be met with, who are so far enemies to their own repose, as to suffer a luke-warm indifference to take place of an ardent love.

“ I, for my part, am too sensible of the value of the blessing I possess, and of what I am indebted to Lady Murray, ever, voluntarily, to deprive myself of a prize, after which I have so long languished.

“ My adorable wife, (for now I may so call her) had too great a share of solidity in her disposition, and too much gratitude and generosity in her soul, not to be eternally the same to

a man whose sentiments for her are incapable of change."

"You are then, the happiest of mortal, my dear ap Thomas," replied Henry, "all things conspire to render you so, for I am so touched at your patience and perseverance, so reasonable, and, withal, so tender, that I am determined, by a public approbation, to authorize Lady Murray in her choice; by so doing I will give to the world a shining proof of the great regard I have to your merit, by raising you, at the same time, to a rank of the first distinction."

"Ah," interrupted ap Thomas, casting himself at the King's feet, and embracing his knees, "I am sensible

of your Majesty's goodness, and feel the most grateful acknowledgements for so uncommon a mark of bounty.

“ But my liege, my heart, void of ambition, never aspired to such an elevated condition.

“ The friendship which your Majesty honours me with, and the sweet pleasures it receives from love, amply satisfies all my desires ; I prefer this state of sweetness and tranquillity, to a dignity for which I was never created.

“ Suffer me, therefore, my Sire, to continue, if it is your Majesty's pleasure, as I am ; making my whole application to remain in your favour,

and to bound all my wishes in the possession of my Caroline's heart.

“ Pardon me, then, if I decline an honour which may sully your glory, and wound the character of Lady Murray.”

The King, surprized at the diffidence which to him appeared almost unnatural, remained silent for some moments, doubtful what answer to return.

He thought it impossible for a man to refuse so advantageous an offer ; still less as it came from his Sovereign ; his suspicious heart prompted him, with uneasiness, to penetrate into the cause of what he had so little expected.

He at last fancied to have found the mystery of it in the accusation, with which the Queen had charged ap Thomas.

This idea made such an impression on his mind, that he began to fear, that all he had been listening to, was no other than a plausible fiction, invented merely to conceal his real sentiments.

Thus prepossessed, he reassumed the discourse with an air of chagrin and discontent.

“ Ap Thomas,” said he, “ in order fully to convince me of your veracity, I must be an eye witness of your hap-

piness; I am determined to go with you to Lady Murray: I will not be seen; but I must needs have that definitive satisfaction, which, alone, can stifle, and banish from my remembrance the diffidence which a refusal, so little expected, creates in my soul."

"It makes me truly unhappy, my liege," interrupted ap Thomas, "that you seem still dubious of my innocence, after the effort I have been making to convince you of it; but now, alas! it is no longer time for me to hesitate.

"I will conduct your Majesty to Lady Murray: you shall be witness of my transports, and of her tender-

ness: you will then be satisfied, that the Queen is deceived in taking the proofs of my respectful zeal for signs of temerarious love.

“ But how, my sire, will you deport yourself on this occasion? The surprise into which you will throw Lady Murray, will, infallibly, injure her health, and likewise, at so unpardonable a token of indiscretion in me, contrary to all my solemn vows ; for, to speak plain, I have never yet dared to acquaint her with the violence your majesty has thought fit to do me, nor have I imparted to her the motives which induced you to it.

“ Judge, therefore, the fatal con-

sequences which may be the result of your visit, since, if any accident befalls her, I shall never cease to reproach myself."

"Hear nothing," replied the King, impatiently; "I again give you my promise, with oaths the most sacred and inviolable; and you may assuredly depend, that Lady Murray shall not perceive my being with you."

"Well!" said ap Thomas, "when will your Majesty go?"

"This very evening," replied Henry "as soon as I am disengaged, I will be without the palace where you will remain for me."

Ap Thomas, having received these instructions, full of trouble and agitation of mind, left the King's apartments.

CHAP. VI.

The Queen, who, by Lady Lichfield had been informed of the long conference which had passed between the King and ap Thomas, doubted not in the least, but that the whole subject thereof had been the recital of an amour, the very thought of which drove her to despair.

The violent rage that agitated her breast, making her extremely restless and unhappy, immediately after supper she went, accompanied by Lady Lichfield, into the area before her apartments, to discourse with her, at liberty, of the tortures under which she laboured, and of the designs she had projected against ap Thomas.

The evening was extremely pleasant, though the moon gave no light, so that the coolness of the air engaging her to stay, she continued her walk longer than she at first intended.

She had walked to and fro several times, until weariness at last obliged her to sit down upon a seat. It was then the pleasantest time of the sum-

mer season, and she resolved to stay there until the dawn of the morning.

She had not long been there, when hearing a noise, she perceived two men issue from the palace ; they passed by very near to where she sat : she knew them immediately to be the King and ap Thomas.

“ This night favours my design,” said Henry, in a low voice ; “ under favour of its darkness, concealed from prying eyes, I have an opportunity, unperceived, of becoming an eye witness of the happiness which attends you. I am sensible that I abuse your confidence : but my dear ap Thomas, I love the Queen : her suspicions, far from diminishing, hourly increase, and

she obstinately persists in her belief, that you are in love with her."

"Ah ! my sovereign," interrupted ap Thomas, "I respect her as your consort, but I do not love her otherwise than, as such, I ought to do : and, as to the rest, I entreat you to believe, that no woman can ever appear lovely in my eyes after the divine person who is the sole object of my adoration."

What would not the curious Elizabeth have given to have heard the rest of the conversation ? But as they still continued to depart from the palace, she was deprived of that satisfaction.

"With what rigour am I tortured !" she cried, "nothing comes near the

fury that rends my soul asunder ! But, nothing in nature shall protect from my heavy revenge the unworthy object of my hatred ! As for my own life, I covet not to prolong it for a single moment, only for the pleasure of sacrificing their detested blood to my just revenge.”

Lady Lichfield, alarmed at the vehemence of her passion, endeavoured by every possible means, to calm the rage of her implacable breast ; and it was with great difficulty that she prevailed with her to return to the palace and to take some repose.

“ During this transaction, the King, conducted by ap Thomas, arrived at the castle. They left their horses fastened a few paces distant from the en-

trance into the garden, and advanced towards the little gate, of which ap Thomas had the key.

Having opened it, he led the King to a small distance from the summer-house, contiguous to the scene of bliss. This delightful place was covered with a fine dome, surrounded on three sides with lattice windows, which, from the garden, gave free passage to the sight.

When the fortunate lover had, with great precaution, posted his Majesty behind some trees, he entered the cabinet, which was illuminated with several crystal lamps; when unlocking the door in the wall, immediately a most beautiful little spaniel ran barking out, which was al-

ways the welcome signal whereby Lady Murray had notice of her lover's approach; that happy pair having never had any other witness of their raptures; and now the lovely Caroline, with all her charms, entered into the bower.

The King, who, without being perceived, having a full sight of her, was struck with no small surprise at the gracefulness of her appearance; and the lovely figure she made, added new beauties to that delightful place.

As for ap. Thomas, no less transported, nor less respectful than on the first day of his passion, cast himself at her feet, and seemed to make a thousand amorous protestations of eternal fidelity and adoration, the

distance from them being too great for the King to hear.

He beheld the amiable and enchanting Caroline embrace her faithful consort, and bestow on him such tender caresses, that were sufficient to excite the envy of the happiest monarch in the universe; and it may be easily imagined, that the passionate ap Thomas was not remiss, by his transports, to return the lovely caresses he received.

Lady Murray withdrew towards the dawn of the morning, and ap Thomas retired from that dear scene of bliss, the happiest and most amorous of lovers.

His Majesty was so elated at the

good fortune of his favorite, that he embraced him with the greatest transports of joy, and highly congratulated him for the honor and felicity he enjoyed.

CHAP. VII.

THEY left the place with the same caution they had observed in approaching it, and remounted their horses; returning to the palace with what speed they could.

“It carried with it so little probability,” said the King, as they were

going homeward, “ that you should refuse the advantageous offer which I made you, that, with confusion, I avow I was somewhat doubtful of your sincerity. But, my dear ap Thomas, I am now fully sensible of the delicacy of that refusal.

“ You are possessed of the most agreeable, and most virtuous woman in the world, whom you passionately doat upon: a vain, transitory, idea of grandeur, would, doubtless, prove some diminution of your happy condition.

“ Enjoy,” continued the King, “ enjoy a fortune, so much the greater and more estimable, as you have had the address of heightening the

pleasure of it, by keeping the secret of your happiness, as an impenetrable mystery, and for ever depend upon your Sovereign's bounty and friendship, which, from henceforth, nothing upon earth shall ever be able to stagger."

Ap Thomas full of acknowledgements, thanked the King in the most respectful manner.

He apologized for the necessity he had been reduced to of making him an eye witness of his passion for Lady Murray.

"I am not ignorant," continued he, "that the respect due to your Majesty, ought to have restrained my transports; but, how great soever the

one may be, it must, necessarily, give place to the other."

With these, and similar conversations, they arrived at the palace, and immediately retired to their respective apartments.

The King had scarcely enjoyed a few hours repose, when the unquiet Elizabeth, whom the last night's words had kept waking, resolved, at any rate whatever, to penetrate into a secret upon which she imagined the felicity of her whole life absolutely depended.

She was too well acquainted with the character of his Majesty, not to entertain most sanguine hopes of arriving,

by her artful manœuvres, at the secret.

For this purpose she entered his apartment, and taking a seat—

“ I too inconsiderately disturb your repose,” said she to him, with a haughty and disdainful air, “ since, upon account of your nocturnal excursions, in which your favorite, ap Thomas engages you, your Majesty has more than ordinary need of rest.

“ I was a witness, last night, of your following that unworthy sycophant, who not only insolently attacks my honor in the most sensible part, but has, likewise, the presumption to endeavour at the alienation of your heart from me.

‘ *You* are in love then,” added she, artfully, exalting her voice, “ and notwithstanding all your vows, another robs me of the treasure due alone to my love and tenderness !

“ Is this, then, that secret passion which you have laid to the charge of ap Thomas ? I am betrayed by that ungrateful Lord, who, not satisfied with basely sacrificing me to an undeserving rival, is so ungenerous as to triumph over my credulity.

“ For, in a word, no longer pretend to cast upon your favorite an amour of which he is alone the excuse.

“ Without resentment you suffer the audacious passion he has for me, in regard to the services he renders you

with your new mistress ; but, desist, my lord, from attempting any further to abuse me thus palpably, and permit me to finish the wretched remnant of my life in some obscure corner of the earth."

In pronouncing these last words, the perfidious Queen covered her face with her handkerchief, as if to conceal the tears she pretended were flowing from her eyes.

This artful behaviour had its desired effect on the deluded Henry, who was so moved, that snatching one of her hands, he tenderly pressed it between his own.

" Cast from you," said he, " this unnecessary grief. A false appearance

criminate me in your eyes. But, I solemnly protest to you, that the last night's adventure, which gives you so much uneasiness, wholly concerned ap Thomas, and not me.

“It was in order to dissipate your suspicions, and likewise my own, that I was desirous of having ocular demonstration of the veracity of his suspicions.

“I am at length fully convinced of his assertions ; and now when nothing is capable of troubling my tranquillity, you are endeavouring to make me unhappy, by starting doubts and scruples equally offensive and injurious both to my honour and my love.”

“What poor excuses ! what weak

evasions are these !” cried the impatient Queen : “ do you imagine I can be so satisfied, so easily imposed upon ? no ! no ! add not the lowest and most ungenerous artifice to the most sensible of all affronts.

“ If your arguments were founded on truth, you would, unsolicited, have been impatient until you had named to me the object of ap Thomas’s vows, in order to acquit yourself of a suspicion, which, with so apparent a probability, alarms me.

“ But you make use of an imaginary object, purely to conceal that real one for which you sigh.”

“ I must request of you, my dear Elizabeth, not to harbour such suspi-

cions ; recal to mind the proofs I have always given you of my tenderness, and rest assured, that your suspicions are unfounded.

“Is not this sufficient? or, would you have me name a secret, which, by the strongest, and most sacred oaths, I am bound to keep inviolable?”

“Well, then,” replied the Queen with a haughty air ; “keep this important secret ; but hope for nothing from me but coldness and indifference.”

With these words, she abruptly left the room, and went to impart the whole purport of their conference to Lady Lichfield.

That artful confidant readily conjectured, that the method she had taken, was the only way to sift out of the King what she was so desirous of knowing; and these two pernicious women instantly set about studying the measures necessary to be taken, in order to arrive at their point; the result of which deliberation was, that the Queen should feign herself indisposed, in order by exciting the pity and compassion of her fond consort, in an unguarded moment to extort from him the secret, she so ardently desired.

CHAP. VIII.

IN the meanwhile, Henry, afflicted with Elizabeth's displeasure, resolved to study some means to appease her ire.

He racked his brain in thinking upon how he should accomplish it. He foresaw, with anguish and concern, that he should scarce ever be able to

overcome her obstinacy, but by sacrificing to her ap Thomas's [secret; but his honour, and his innate probity, not permitting him to hesitate a moment whether he should violate, or religiously observe his promises; he therefore sought other methods to convince her; and he fancied, that his assiduity, accompanied with magnificent entertainments, would, in time, dissipate a suspicion which must occasion great uneasiness to herself.

He had just fixed upon this resolution, when ap Thomas, agreeably to the duty of his situation, entered his apartment.

The King made no mention to him of the discourse he had lately held with the Queen.

He was apprehensive he would be alarmed thereat, and that he might imagine him to be capable of committing a weakness from which he thought himself for ever exempt.

“ Ap Thomas,” said Henry, “ I intend to proclaim a day of universal rejoicing ; you must take upon yourself to provide the most magnificent entertainment in your power ; for, it is my design, to celebrate the satisfaction I feel for your union with the incomparable Lady Murray.”

The favourite, highly pleased, thanked his majesty for the honour he intended him, and, making a low obeisance, went to put his orders into execution.

The Queen soon began to put into practice the artifice she designed to make use of. The King going to visit her in her apartment, was denied admittance, though in a very respectful manner, by Lady Lichfield, who assuming an air of great affliction told him, "That the Queen was seized with a violent illness. That she trembled for the consequence of so sudden an indisposition; to prevent which, it was very requisite that she should not be disturbed."

There needed no more to drive that weak, amorous, and credulous king almost to despair. He immediately retired to his own apartments, to endeavour there, alone, to dissipate his sorrow, and to wait until the Queen should be visible.

But his uneasiness giving him no manner of respite, he, almost every moment, returned to inquire concerning the health of her, upon whom his own absolutely depended.

The artful Lichfield, under several different pretences, still prevented him from gaining information of the Queen's indisposition, as well as foreseeing that those obstacles would redouble his disquiet ; nor was she mistaken.

As the King had not been able to see her all that day, early the next morning he came to her chamber door; when, being introduced to her bed-side, he, in the most passionate language, expressed the extreme concern he had been in, upon account of her sudden illness, and for having been so long

deprived of the pleasure of seeing her.

But she, with a well feigned tenderness, interrupting him as he was about to proceed,

“ Can I believe, my Lord,” said she, “ that you are at all sensible to any thing that concerns me, since I am reduced to the wretched condition in which you find me, solely through the grief and agitation of mind which your perfidy has occasioned ? I loved you ; I thought myself beloved ; your hourly repeated protestations, still gave me fresh assurance of it ; and I find myself betrayed, at the very time when my heart was wholly abandoning itself to the sole pleasure of possessing yours.

“ But, what most of all redoubles my despair, is, the dragging along with me, in my own destruction, the precious pledge of your former love, which I carry within me, and which you are hastening to make an innocent victim of the levity of your inconstant soul.”

“ Madam,” interrupted the King, whose weak mind was visible in his countenance, “ what fatal satisfaction can you take in thus driving me to the brink of despair, by this unjust affliction to which you abandon yourself ?

“ For heaven’s sake, consider what appearance is there that I should be capable of the perfidy wherewith you charge me. My conduct, my excessive fondness for you, are more than

sufficient to destroy an idea so directly contrary to what I owe to myself; and to add, if possible, to these, reasons, I, again, swear and protest to you, that curiosity, and nothing else, led me to see the mistress of ap Thomas.

“I was willing to have ocular demonstration, fearing to be imposed upon by a false confidence; besides, your instigations, as well as my own suspicions, led me thither.”

“I am but too well convinced,” returned the Queen, “by the frivolous evasions you alledge, how little you are touched at my present illness, and at the danger in which, at the same time, you expose this, so long wished for, successor of yours.”

These words she pronounced with an air so tender, and languishing, that Henry perceived he could not long withstand such a trial, and therefore, hoping to divert her from insisting further, he said, "Heaven is my witness, madam, that nothing can stand in competition with the passion I have for you ; but can you desire that I should dishonour myself, and blast my character by the basest, and most unworthy perjury in the world ?

"Would you, by so black a piece of treachery, make me the ridicule of all mankind, and render my name infamous throughout the universe ? I am born a king ; and shall I sully that august character, by the base, inglorious perpetration of a deed of horror, which will be held in deserved detestation ?

Cease, madam, cease to press me any further, if my honour, and good name are as dear to you as they ought to be."

This dangerous woman was too well acquainted with the King's disposition, not to be sensible that he began to stagger ; for which reason, re-assuming the discourse without suffering him to relapse, she thus continued :

" All that you dread, my lord, might come to pass, in case I had any particular motive, or interest, to divulge the secret I demand of you with pressing importunity ; but, consider, my dear lord, that it is another, *yourself*, who languishes to be freed from a doubt which plunges me into the depth of despair.

“It is a restless, tortured wife, who desires to efface from her heart a suspicion which consumes her, which incessantly preys upon her vitals! For, in effect, my Lord, what other motive could excite my curiosity? What is ap Thomas’s passion to me, if I cease to be the object of it? What satisfaction can I reap by disturbing, by my indiscretion, the tranquillity of the two lovers who are happy in each others embraces?”

“Recollect yourself, then, my Lord, and be sensible how weak and frivolous are all your excuses against such unanswerable arguments.”

“Well, Madam,” answered the credulous Henry, “you have conquered!”

I perceive the necessity of satisfying you ; but, allow me, at least, time to get the better of the scruples which, still, is warring in my soul.

“ Think, then, upon your recovery, and it shall not be long before I will convince you, by my compliance, of the excess of my love.”

After this conversation, the King withdrew : But the apprehension lest ap Thomas should read in his countenance the remorse wherewith his soul was previously agitated, made him take the resolution of absenting himself, for some hours, from the palace.

To accomplish this, he ordered hor-

ses to be saddled, and accompanied by a few officers, rode out, to gain time to dissipate his chagrin and confusion.

During his absence, he was plunged into reflections, which filled his mind with the darkest ideas.

The faithless deed he was about to commit, represented itself to his imagination as a thing wholly unworthy of him.

His oaths violated! His probity wounded by an action so mean, so inglorious! His friendship so inhumanly, so perfidiously betrayed! All this joined together, exposed to his view an irreparable breach in his unsullied honor.

But then, instantly, the arbitrary, the irresistible, the impetuous passion he had for the Queen, stifled all those vain scruples. He no longer looked upon his proceeding as a failing in his obligation or his duty; but reckoned it as the only means of saving an amiable, a lovely woman, who would not be otherwise satisfied.

It was an acknowledgement, a debt of gratitude due to the most tender, the most perfect love.

In a word, it was a secret which was to remain buried in the profoundest silence: What, mistrust the Queen!

Who, alas! is capable of resisting

love, when it attacks a heart with all its powers? Of this the King soon became sensible, by melancholy and fatal experience.

CHAP. IX.

IN the interim, ap Thomas, surprized at the King's riding out without his retinue, contrary to his custom, could not help conceiving some suspicions thereat.

Since the confidence he had been compelled to make him, he had been in perpetual alarm ; for which reason

he, precipitately, mounted his horse to find him; after having rode some time, he perceived the King returning, who received him with as pleasant a countenance as he had ever done before.

The King, having had leisure to settle his mind, took the way towards the palace. The conversation with ap Thomas ran wholly upon the entertainment; and the King said to him, so as not to be heard by any other, that he designed to go in person to Lady Murray, to prevail with her to embellish, with her presence, a festival, which, in reality, was made merely upon her account.

These discourses brought them into the King's apartments, when they

still held further conference, while the Queen was studying how to compleat what she had so successfully begun.

The idea of her approaching vengeance, filled her heart with a malignant joy, and her confidante Lichfield, who participated in her satisfaction, likewise flattered herself, that she should soon see the fatal effects.

The King, as amorous, and as tender as ever, repaired the same evening to the apartment of the Queen; and it was in the most tender moments of his passion, that the artful Eliazabeth, spurning her too weak consort, said,

“ Expect not from me either ten-

derness or sensibility; I insist upon having ap[er] Thomas's secret communicated to me; without that, in all its circumstances, never more hope from me ought but a forced duty.

“ Speak, my Lord,” continued she, “ has your heart got the better of those insignificant scruples which lately attacked it? In a word, are you determined? Have you made a choice? Are you resolved upon my ruin, or will you enjoy my affection?”

“ Ah, Madam,” interrupted the King, in mournful accents, “ you have triumphed! Can I hesitate between the two extremes you mention? I will, then, since it must be so, impart to you this important secret.

“ My blind compliance is about to fix an eternal blot upon my memory. But, alas ! such is my weakness ; such is the ascendancy you have over me ! Your tears have unmanned me !

“ But, Madam,” added he, with a tone more severe, “ listen to the conditions I annex to what I am about to reveal to you. Notwithstanding the ardour with which you inspire my soul, and the violence of my passion for you, I swear by the Eternal Power above, who is witness of my perjury, that, upon the least intelligence you give of this secret, nothing shall protect you from my just resentment.

“ Think well on it, then, Madam, before you force me to break silence ;

examine the danger to which your imprudence may expose you."

"I fear nothing," interrupted the Queen, hastily, "I will inviolably conceal this dangerous secret of your's. It concerns me as much as it does yourself."

"Since no consideration can surmount your positiveness," replied the King, "listen then to what I am about to relate to you."

"But, before I commence, I once more repeat, that if ever you divulge the least syllable of it, you must expect my utmost vengeance."

Having said this, the indiscreet Henry made her an ample detail of all

the adventures of his favorite, without omitting any one particular.

What intelligence was this to Elizabeth! If the darkness of the night had not concealed her violent agitation of soul, the King must, infallibly, have penetrated into the motives of her importunate curiosity.

But as he took no notice of it, he went on, and told her the reason of his having been seen by her in company with ap Thomas.

“ You see,” said he, without giving her time to interrupt him, “ that my faith to you is preserved, to the utmost, and that my protestations of love, are all real; but attempt not to abuse my goodness and condescension.

“ The secret which I have imparted to you, is doubly sacred to me, both upon account of my solemn vows, and of the part which ap Thomas has in the transaction, whose father fell to save my life.”

“ At length, Sire,” replied she, “ you have eased my heart, and ended my anxiety. I am now no longer apprehensive of losing a treasure so justly my due, for the attachment I have for you. But why did you hesitate so much to acquaint me with ap Thomas’s correspondence with Lady Murray?”

“ It is impossible for you to have derived greater pleasure from that union than I.

“I assure you that I not only return your favorite all my former esteem, but that, I will, likewise, as much as in me lies, contribute towards rendering the entertainment which you are preparing, worthy the sentiments I have for that deserving pair.

“In the meanwhile, I would not, by any means, have you take the least notice to ap Thomas of your having imparted to me the secret.

“He will, without doubt, think he has some reason to complain; nor is he, perhaps, so much as he ought to be, persuaded of my candour and discretion.”

With these and similar discourses the Queen knew, so artfully, how to mask the fury which devoured her, that the credulous King repented his having so long concealed from her knowledge an affair of which she seemed so justly to approve.

But, alas ! he comprehended not upon what cruel motive she intrested herself therein : had he been able to have read her soul, he would there have found thoughts concealed of the blackest dye.

In effect, the King had no sooner left her, but, going into her closet, she caused Lady Lichfield to be called, and, with the utmost vehemence, gave her a full account of the important discovery she had made.

“ You see,” said she, “ that I must for ever renounce the hopes of touching the heart of the ungrateful ap Thomas ! let us then, without hesitation, abandon ourselves to rage and despair.

“ I will, by the most terrible and remorseless vengeance, sacrifice to my resentment my two detested enemies, who destroy my repose.

“ Let the perfidious ap Thomas be our first victim, at the altar of revenge !” cried she : “ let my eyes, immediately, be witnesses of his ruin ! let him feel the deserved reward of his ingratitude !”

“ If I might presume, madam, to give my advice in opposition to yours,” answered the subtle Lichfield, “ I

would do myself the honour to represent to your Majesty, that by the death of ap Thomas, the principal victim of your revenge would escape.

“Lady Murray, who would readily penetrate into the cause of his loss, would, infallibly, avoid the effects of your resentment; for which reason, my advice, since you have so long permitted me to offer it to you, is, that you get both these objects of your hatred here together, and then sacrifice them both at once.”

This counsel so flattered the fury of the relentless Queen, that she determined to follow it, which, notwithstanding it would retard her designs, yet it made the inhuman

scheme she had laid, so much the more likely to succeed.

She had, with this view, the art so to disguise her thoughts, that ap Thomas, who carefully observed her, to read in her eyes whether his sovereign had betrayed him, could not discover in her looks the least alteration.

During these transactions, the time appointed for the entertainment approached; and numbers of lords and ladies arrived from all parts of the country to be present at the anticipated magnificent festival; the King, as he had promised ap Thomas, went in person to invite Lady Murray, who, notwithstanding her inclinations for a retired life, consented to attend.

The King, as has been before observed, had given ap Thomas orders to provide for the ensuing entertainment; he had to his utmost abilities collected together every thing that would conduce to the hilarity of the company.

These things were all partly executed. Nothing could be more magnificent, than all that passed at the palace; the honor of all was paid to Lady Murray; and she never appeared more lovely than upon that occasion.

There were some very magnificent fire works exhibited: their majesties attended, after which the King conducted the ladies to the Queen's apartment (where they were to sup with her Majesty,) and returned to his own.

He gave there a most splendid entertainment, that which the Queen gave in her own apartment, was no less delicate, nor any wise inferior in magnificence.

The entertainment was no sooner over, than the Queen amused the numerous assembly of ladies who surrounded her, with the history of two unfortunate lovers, which she told them, she had lately heard.

This malignant woman, addressing herself to the injured Murray, (who during this recital had great difficulty to support herself,

“Is it not true,” said she, “that there is something in the passion of these two lovers of a very singular cha-

racter, and that a lady, capable of a love so implicit and disinterested, deserved not the perfidy of that traitor, who divulged a secret which ought to have been dearer to him than life? but he could not refuse this sacrifice to the new mistress, whom he at present adores.”

“ I agree perfectly with your majesty,” replied Lady Murray in visible confusion ; “ that lover has certainly committed an action very ungenerous : but this new mistress of his, whom you mention, it may be presumed, has paid for that sacrifice with all her innocence.”

The Queen, satisfied with her vengeance would not make any reply to a thing, of the whole force of which she was fully sensible. She changed the

subject, and thereby gave the disconsolate Caroline the liberty of retiring to her own apartment, there to give vent to a grief which she could no longer contain.

The King during this time had been reading aloud some dispatches he had just received from the court of France, but recollecting that ap Thomas had received by the same courier, the detail of an affair of the utmost moment of which he had ordered him to inform himself; he immediately sent for him. On his majesty's asking him for the letter, he immediately presented the King a letter; but such was his agitation and confusion, that instead of the political letter, he delivered his majesty one he had received from Lady Lichfield, written by the Queen.

This letter had just been delivered him, and such was his agitation at receiving it, and being sent for by his majesty that he had not perused it. Ap Thomas, on giving the letter to his majesty, hastily, quitted the apartment.

The King, immediately, drew near to a light, in order to inform himself of the contents of the letter; but, heaven! how inexpressible was his surprise, when he recognized the handwriting of the Queen, and read the following words:

“ I have done all, ungrateful traitor, to make myself beloved by thee: I have not neglected any thing to make myself feared by thee. Thou hast resisted all my anxious wishes, learn, then, what

you have compelled me to do. I triumph, ap Thomas, and my rival sinks under my vengeance. I have found means to join with the subtle poison, which consumes her, the horror of believing you perfidious. I will not leave thee ignorant of the means by which I accomplished my end. I imposed on the King's credulity ; I had the address to force the weak, unworthy Henry, to become perjured."

Who can express the horror, with which the King was seized at reading that letter ! A deadly chillness thrilled through his veins, and, for some time, rendered him unconscious of all around him. But, at length, the danger in which Lady Murray was exposed to, re-animated his faculties. He sent, with speed, to inquire whether she was still

with the Queen; and word being brought him, that she was gone to her own apartment with tokens of indisposition in her countenance, he flew thither, forbidding that any one should follow him: But, what a dreadful scene of woe, was there presented to his view !

The beautiful, the matchless Caroline, extended on the bed, with all the symptoms of death upon her countenance.

The wretched ap Thomas, who, lying upon the bed-side, was pouring out the small remainder of his blood from a large wound in his breast, which seemed to suffer him to live but to close the eyes of his beloved wife.

At this shocking spectacle, the King, already scarcely himself, sunk under so many afflictions; and staggering to a chair; he fell, while his eyes fixed with horror on these unfortunate objects, contemplated the dreadful scene.

Ap Thomas, looking on his wife with a dying eye, said, "Behold her, my sovereign, the cruel victim of my compliance with your wishes! I die suspected of the darkest perfidy; and to finish the course of my wretched life, I drag after me to the grave the most perfect, the most finished of human nature!"

Having said these words, the true and faithful, but unfortunate lover, breathed his last.

“ Oh ! stay yet a moment, my dearest Reuben,” cried the dying Caroline, “ our inhuman enemy shall not enjoy a compleat triumph, since I die convinced of thy fidelity, and persuaded, that the disastrous fate which hurries us both to eternity, is an effect of thy virtue.”

These last words she pronounced with difficulty, and immediately these two lovers were united in the bonds of death, whose merit and fidelity deserved a better fate.

The King was unable for some time to withdraw his eye from the shocking scene ; but rage suddenly took possession of his faculties, and seizing a dagger, hurried towards the Queen's apartment, and would have revenged

the death of that pair at the expence of her life, had he not been prevented.

Finding himself baffled in his attempts on Elizabeth, he would have stabbed himself, but was likewise withheld.

When the passions of this unhappy man were somewhat calmed, he thought himself under an obligation to the surviving family of the unhappy ap Thomas; he therefore caused his brother to succeed him in all the honors with which Reuben had been invested. He likewise united him with the amiable Montgomery, thus using every means in his power to dissipate the affliction caused by his unworthy credulity.

Lady Lichfield, apprehensive of what might result to her for the part she had acted in the bloody affair, fled over to France, where she died literally in want.

From this history, I hope my readers will perceive the necessity of curbing their passions, and listening rather to the dictates of reason, and moderation, than to revenge and jealousy.

END OF THE HOUSE OF LANCASTER.

PIEDMONTESE.

A TALE.

ABOUT the year 1640, the city of Turin gave birth to a lady of the name of Amelia; she was the daughter of M. Feranci, a gentleman descended from the highest nobles his country could boast of. But the splendour and magnificence in which they had been

compelled to sustain their dignity, had so far impaired his fortune, that when he came to inherit it, he found little more than a sufficiency to live in the rank of a gentleman. Naturally of a timid, bashful disposition, he was not grieved at this loss, which to many born in such a high station would have looked upon the greatest of evils. He rather was thankful that such was the dissipation of his parent, that it enabled him to follow the bent of his inclinations. Laying aside, therefore, his rank and title, he took that of Feranci, and obtained in marriage the daughter of a wealthy countryman, who had known him in better circumstances. Amelia was the only offspring of this connection; and with her birth her mother breathed her last.

We shall pass over the education of Amelia, only mentioning that every accomplishment that could be desired was bestowed upon her by her fond parent.

Among the visitors in the family of Feranci was Antonio, a young nobleman of an ample fortune, and great accomplishments. He saw, and loved Amelia, he solicited her in marriage of her father, but the fond parent, so far overlooked his interest, that he refused to comply with the earnest intreaties of the impassioned Antonio. The disappointed admirer, in anguish, returned to Amelia, and entreated her to plead in his behalf.

“ Indeed Antonio,” said she, with an enchanting smile, “ however much

I wish to see you happy, yet, believe me, I will study that of my parent ere I yield a thought to my own inclination."

"Dear Amelia," said Antonio, "let me intreat your interference; to try to soften his cruel mandate, he loves you, and will comply with your intreaties."

"Cease, Antonio," said Amelia, as she rose to leave the room, "I will never express a wish upon the subject, till I have my father's sanction."

Determining at all events to possess her whom his heart admired, he returned to Feranci, and entreated him to comply with his wishes. In fine,

by importunity and intreaty, he obtained the consent of Feranci, and very soon after was united to the lovely Amelia.

Five years passed over in one continued scene of happiness and domestic joys: at the end of which period, a visible change took place in the behaviour of Antonio. He was more distant, and cold in his conduct to his wife. Amelia was hurt at this change, though she forbore to notice it; she was unremitting in her endeavours to please him, although she was grieved to see her assiduities treated with neglect.

Gambling, that most hateful of vices, was to Antonio the greatest delight; the consequence was, that

though at first he had a run of good fortune, yet that was generally succeeded by losses of double and treble the sum.

It had ever been his custom before and after his marriage to enter into the gaiety of the Carnival at Venice, where that festival was observed with much greater splendour and magnificence, than in any other part of Europe ; nor was he ever known to have missed going thither at that time, when he generally staid seven or eight weeks ; yet the beauteous Amelia never was offended at his so doing, further than the regret which his absence caused in her breast.

Among the many into whose houses he was admitted, and with whose family he was intimate, was that of

Foscari, an noble venetian senator, whose upright character, and inviolable integrity was the admiration of his colleagues and countrymen. He had seen Antonio several times, and every successive opportunity raised him in his estimation. When the Carnival was about to end, Foscair invited the Piedmontese to sojourn at his house for a short time.

Foscari was by birth a Venetian, he loved his country ; but without that bigotry, which too often characterises the enthusiast.

The family of the Venetian had been great ; but the hand of death had deprived him of all except one lovely daughter, named Leonarda, of whom he was passionately fond. She was about the

age of nineteen, when Antonio was introduced into the family. He was so struck with her beauty, that he regretted his hasty marriage with one every way inferior to Leonarda in point of beauty.

To live without her, was impossible. He wish'd to part from his wife, that he might possess the lovely Leonarda, but he knew not on what pretext he might sue for a separation. By his insinuating address he soon gained an ascendancy over the heart of the beautiful Venetian. Nor did he omit daily to give the most solemn assurances both to herself and her relations, that nothing delayed his happiness, but the unavoidable necessity of waiting till some affairs of the utmost importance were settled.

In the meanwhile his own lady, uneasy at his unusually long stay at Venice, incessantly begged him, with pressing letters, to return.

His answers were always kind, he pretended, that urgent business, detained him; and in this anxious state was the distracted Amelia kept for more than a year. At last she heard from several creditable persons of her husband's infidelity.

Antonio's acquaintance were very numerous, and as he made no secret of his love for Leonarda in public, it is not to be wondered at, that Amelia should hear of an amour that was conducted with so little caution.

This news was such a shock to the

injured Amelia, that it almost deprived her of her senses, and in the height of her despair, she wrote a letter to her faithless husband, reproaching him with his baseness, and solemnly protesting, "That if he was not at Turin within ten days, she would without fail be with him at Venice, in a very short time after."

Soon after he had received this threatening letter, he unfortunately (for himself) dropped it out of his pocket, in Leonarda's apartment. The sight of it raised her curiosity, and watching an opportunity, she took it up unperceived by him.

When he had withdrawn from her presence, she opened it, with an agitation and concern which seemed to

foretell the contents. Her amazement and indignation was beyond expression, when, upon her perusing those fatal lines she was too fully convinced of the perfidy of the man she loved.

The next time he came to visit her, she forbore to reproach him with his villanous designs upon her, but a scheme was concerted with the assistance of her father to draw from him his sentiments.

He was received with the usual marks of esteem, for some time after this event; no opportunity occurring to reap an ample revenge on his villany.

He had missed his letter, and was under the most dreadful apprehension from the fear of it, having fallen into

the hands of Leonarda. But as he was still received by her with the same kindness, he was convinced that his fears were groundless.

So far did the Foscari family conceal their anger, that a day was fixed for the signing of articles, previous to their union. For which purpose a considerable number of Foscari's friends were invited to an entertainment; and Antonio was intreated to bring with him as great a number as he could conveniently invite, that nothing might be spared to render the entertainment conducive to mirth. Antonio rejoiced at the prospect of so much happiness, failed not to make his good fortune known to his nearest friends, and invited them to the entertainment.

The day at length arrived. Antonio attired in the gayest manner, accompanied by his friends accordingly repaired early to the house of Foscari. They were received in the most flattering manner. The entertainment passed off without any particular occurrence, after dinner they retired to the gardens of Foscari to partake of the music and other entertainments, which had been then prepared.

As had been previously concerted, some ladies started a question a-propos to the villany of Antonio, and what such a man deserved. The female part of the company were unanimous in execrating such a monster as they termed him ; but some of the gentlemen present tried to vindicate the man.

To describe the distress of Antonio during the debate, would be impossible.—Some of the speeches were as daggers to his heart. His agitation was apparent to every one, who knew the tendency of the question that had been proposed.

Leonarda, after giving her opinion, in which she agreed with the ladies who had spoken before, said to Antonio, “Your opinion accords with mine, undoubtedly?” He attempted in vain to reply. Leonarda, with affected surprize, enquired the cause of his agitation.

“It is the workings of a guilty conscience,” suddenly exclaimed Foscarei, rising in proud majesty from his seat.

“ Villain, apostate, do you know this (shewing the letter which he had dropped) do the contents remain still on your mind, do not the cries of an injured wife strike upon your hardened soul. Like a fiend, you have insinuated yourself into my family to rob me of the prop of my old age.”

“ My friends, and you the friends of that base perfidious man,” continued the enraged father, turning to the company, “ will join with me in execrating him when you are informed of the treachery which he has used to obtain my daughter. This letter which I hold in my hand, and which he dropped in the presence of my child, was sent by a wife at Turin, whom he has left to pine in soli-

tary sadness over the absence of a husband whom she loves to distraction.”

Murmurs of disapprobation sounded from every part; and the detected Antonio, rushing from the company in despair, went home; but so overwhelmed with passion and despair, that, upon entering his apartment, he certainly would have ended his now wretched existence, had not some of his friends, knowing the violence of his passions, followed him, and prevented so calamitous an event from taking place.

In the mean while, the wretched Leonarda, (for she really loved Antonio) in order to deprive him of all further hopes, retired into a convent;

which reduced him, if possible, to greater despair.

But, in a day or two after, having received fresh letters from Turin, whereby he was assured, that the too much injured Amelia, was actually preparing to set out for Venice; he thought the most prudent method he could take, was to endeavour to divert that storm which was ready to burst over his head.

As he found it no longer possible for him to stay at Venice, he immediately returned to Turin; where, being arrived, his fond wife received him even with such transports of joy, tenderness, and love, as plainly demonstrated, that, at the moment she beheld him, she entirely forgot all the

causes of complaint she had against him, never upbraiding him with his unworthy conduct; and whenever she did, it was in a very mild and jocular manner, by way of jest.

Eight months passed in perfect harmony, by which time the gentle Amelia became pregnant, and he seemed fonder of her than ever.

One evening, as he was sitting with her in their bed-chamber, he suddenly started up, saying, he was about to retire to his devotions, and, at the same time, advised her to do the like; she readily did as he desired her, at the same time, thanking him for reminding her of what she ought to have remembered of her own accord.

The next morning, chancing to awake sooner than ordinary, she was under no small surprize at missing her husband: But she was much more astonished, when, a few moments after, she saw him coming from his closet, bearing in his arms all those materials used at the funerals of persons of distinction.

Somewhat disordered and confused, she asked him the meaning of such an extraordinary preparation, and to what use he intended to put those things?

“Of that thou wilt soon be sensible,” replied he, his eyes sparkling with fury, “know, wretch, that they all belong to thee; I have prepared them for thee, and none else. This

is the time I have fixed upon to take a direful vengeance on thee for all the sufferings I have undergone, and of which thou hast been the only cause; and these are the tapers which are to surround thy bed, as soon as I have sacrificed thee to that loss which thou hast occasioned by thy detestable jealousy."

Scarce had he uttered these words, but the unhappy woman sprang from her bed, and, confounded, pale and trembling, cast herself at his feet, and melting into tears, a sight sufficiently moving to have raised compassion in the hardest heart.

"Alas!" said she, "pardon my dearest Lord, I implore you, whatever I may inadvertently have said or done

to offend you. It was excess of love that made me impatient at your absence, and occasioned my proceeding more violently than otherwise I should have done. Take not away, I conjure you, a life, which I have no other desire of prolonging, than to render it serviceable to you."

"Thou basest of women," cried this unnatural monster, "this moment ends thy detested life."

When extending his arm, he was just preparing to plunge the fatal steel into her faultless bosom; but, at that moment, a sudden knocking at the door prevented him. He hastily went to open it, when, instantly a young girl, the lady's waiting maid, rushed in, and ran to embrace her trembling

mistress, resolutely telling the inhuman executioner, who stood with his murderous hand armed with a poinard, more becoming a ruffian, than a nobleman, "that he should first dispatch her, before he should offer the least violence to her dear lady."

This generous servant; whose apartment was separated from that of her lady, only a single wainscot, had overheard all that had passed, and, determined, whatever might be the consequence, to assist her mistress as far as lay in her power.

"Well, thou rash, fool-hardy wretch," cried he, foaming with rage, "first take what you so earnestly wish for, and then bear witness of the sacrifice I shall, next, make of this

jealous woman, who is far more deserving of it than you."

At these words, he stabbed the heroic girl to the heart, who instantly dropped down at his feet.

As he imagined he had effected his purpose, he attempted not to second the blow, but, fiend-like, hurried on by his fury, he flew to his poor terrified and prostrate wife, and most inhumanly butchered her, by giving her repeated stabs.

When he had committed this inhuman deed, he placed the body of his wife on the bed, and after having covered it, he surrounded the bed with a number of lighted tapers; he then withdrew, cool and unconcerned, into

his cabinet, where, with the same ruffian hands with which he had just before so inhumanly assassinated an innocent maid, and his own virtuous wife, he wrote a billet to her father and mother, pressing them, without a moment's delay, to hasten immediately to his house, upon an affair of the greatest consequence.

When they arrived, this audacious and unparalleled monster, conducted them to the place where this lamentable scene of horror had been transacted, and throwing off the velvet covering, from the still warm corpse, with amazing insolence, advised them to take care of their daughter's funeral.

When the mother, who happened

to enter first, saw the pale corpse, she uttered a piercing shriek and fell lifeless beside her daughter. The father alarmed at this occurrence, started forward to find the cause, and the first object that met his eyes was the mangled corpse of his darling child. With a vacant stare he turned to those who had followed, but not a word could he utter, his emotion was so powerful. He raised his wife from the bed, and giving her to the care of the spectators, threw himself on the bed and clasped the body of his Amelia in his arms. In an incoherent manner he enquired the reason of so dreadful an act—every eye was turned on Antonio, who, in a cool, undaunted manner, and a firm tone, answered thus:

“ I am the perpetrator of this act, which you may call infamous, but which I deem praise-worthy. You are at liberty to deliver me up to justice. If you are thus disposed, I claim a like privilege of revenging the wrongs done to me by Amelia. But that proceeding will not recover your daughter, neither would it be the means of bringing from me a full confession of the causes that led to this proceeding.”

He then related the manner in which she had behaved to him, while he was at Venice; by writing such presumptuous letters, threatening to meet him there if he did not immediately return. You will now act as you please, deliver me up to justice, let me, by an ignominious

death, expiate my offence ; but before you do that, I would advise you to pause, for be assured that the disclosure I shall make, will compel you to curse the hour that gave you a daughter."

" That is false, false as thy heart," exclaimed the father, starting with horror from the bed whereon he had lain.

The base insinuation, of Antonio, on the fair fame of Amelia, almost drove her distracted parents frantic.

But as they did not wish a public exposure of the circumstances, and that nothing would restore to them their lost child, they were content

to save his life, at the price of his silence, since though they were convinced of the *falsehood* of his insinuations, yet Antonio would dress them in so specious a garb, as would, no doubt, impose upon many. All the fond parents wished, was, that their daughter's name might pass to the grave, as unspotted as she had lived.

“Ha! Ha!” laughed the brutal Antonio, “because your house would suffer a little contamination from a few of my words, you are willing to avoid the sweets of revenge. Well, well, I am content.”

They were here interrupted by a piercing shriek from the mother, and on turning their attention towards

the place from whence it issued, a pleasing, but melancholy scene took place.

“ She lives, she lives,” exclaimed the frantic mother, almost delirious with delight, “ help, help, for Heaven’s sake restore her.”

The attendants were compelled to remove the parents into an anti-room, to prevent the sudden surprise resulting from the sight. And instantly a surgeon was sent for to the assistance of the attendants. Ere he arrived, Amelia opened her eyes, and in a faint voice, enquired where she was.

“ Hush, hush, my dear lady,” said one of the attendants, you are safe,

keep yourself easy, be not apprehensive—

“Apprehensive!” exclaimed Amelia, feebly, “Heavens! what means this blood—Oh, I recollect—My pains remind me of that sad occurrence; but it matters not, I forgive it.”

The Surgeon entered and put a stop to this, by desiring the absence of the attendants while he examined her wounds.

“I perceive,” said Amelia, “you entertain no hopes of my recovery, I am aware of that, they are mortal. I am not sorry. Yet do not deceive me with hopes, you do not yourself entertain any. I am prepared to die.”

The melancholy move of the head of the surgeon, confirmed her surmise. But willing to give her some comfort he returned for answer, that if she kept herself quiet and forbore to agitate herself, something might be done.

“No,” answered she, “I feel that impossible. Death even now is approaching, let me therefore entreat you quickly to permit my parents to visit me, to receive my last farewell.”

The surgeon endeavoured to convince her of the necessity of keeping herself quiet and free from agitation, but no longer able to resist the entreaties of Amelia, he left her to mention her wish to her parents, who instantly rushed into their daughter's chamber.

“ My daughter, my dear daughter, my wronged Amelia,” were all the Father or the Mother could articulate while the tears chased each other down their aged cheeks.

“ Oh, my parents, what a meeting is this,” at length cried Amelia breaking silence.—“ Be comforted, my dear father, weep not my mother, your daughter is going whither the ills of this life cannot follow her.”

In the course of the time, before her dissolution she accounted the occasion of the fatal catastsophe, and placed the cause in a different light to that in which the murderer had done. The astonishment of the parents, was not so great as might have been supposed, for the insinuations of Antonio had

made no impression on the minds of either. It was with considerable difficulty that she recounted the event, and expired without a groan.

The attendants and friends in the outer chamber who had listened to what passed, were surprized at the long silence which was kept ; but having been enjoined not to disturb them they forbore to enter, till the unusual and unaccountable length alarmed them ; they therefore entered the chamber, and found the parent lying senseless on the bed, beside the deceased Amelia.

With considerable difficulty and after some time had elapsed, they succeeded in recovering them, and with

what consolation they were able to give, they *allayed* the tumult of their feelings.

They now examined the poor girl, who had died for her mistress; but she was irrecoverably gone; not a spark of life remained.

In the meanwhile, Antonio, taking advantage of the surprise and confusion which prevailed in consequence of this event, left the house unnoticed and unattended; and when the parents of the murdered Amelia looked around for the executioner, it was too late.

He had so ordered matters to prevent his being apprehended, that he

soon got out of reach of pursuit, and arrived safe at Venice.

He had flattered himself with the hopes there to put an end to all his unhappiness, in the arms of Leonarda, upon whose account, and for whose sake, he had committed such an infamous and bloody piece of villany.

On his arrival there, he found that she was at her father's country seat, preparing to return to town, but the news of this detestable action soon spreading abroad, it reached her ears just as she was preparing for her journey towards Venice.

Leonarda received these dreadful tidings with horror. That Antonio

was capable of the greatest acts of villainy, she was, alas! but too well convinced.

But that he could commit murder, never for a moment occupied her thoughts.

Her gentle nature could not harbour so horrid an idea of the man she loved—"Oh! ill fated Amelia!" exclaimed Leonarda, in despair, "had *I* never existed—thou had'st still been alive—still, perhaps, been happy!

"Thy husband, him on whom all thy hopes were fixed, would not have committed that horrid crime, which rends my heart!"

Her father, her friends, all endeavoured in vain to console and comfort her. She refused consolation—she would not be comforted, and repeatedly uttered exclamations of pity for the unfortunate Amelia.

The thought of her having been the occasion (though innocent) of that deplorable occurrence, struck her with such horror, that she immediately took a fixed resolution of quitting the world; and notwithstanding all the arguments used by her relations, and others, in order to dissuade her, she soon after retired into a convent for the rest of her days.

Such was the end of a connection which the impious Antonio looked

to with malicious delight: but when he was made acquainted with the resolution of Leonarda he was almost distracted, he raved, he stamped, he tore his hair, and used every gesture that baffled villainy could suggest.

When the first transports of rage and disappointment were somewhat subsided, he made application for a sight of her who was, though indirectly, the cause of this dreadful mischief.

But the resolution of Leonarda was too firmly fixed to be laid aside to gratify a murderer, as she very justly termed Antonio.

Though she had a proper sense of his crime, and thought him one of the most impious of men, still love

had taken so fast a hold of her heart that to forget him was impossible.

So far had he obtained supremacy in her heart, that daily she execrated the fiend-like behaviour of her beloved.

To hate was to her impossible, yet she so far overcame her love, as to avoid an interview, the consequences of which might have proved fatal to her, and of no ultimate benefit to him.

When, therefore, his wish was made known to her, when the messenger painted to her in the most vivid colours, the agony, the love of Antonio, she, with a determinate air rejected the petition, though almost at the expence of her life ; so great was her suffering while refusing.

Antonio, finding how little he had to expect when he was made acquainted with her resolution, resolved to leave Venice immediately.

To live in the same city with her whom he loved to distraction: and yet be denied her soothing presence—her, for whom he had imbrued his hands in the blood of his wife and her attendant, was impossible; life had now become to him an insupportable burthen.

With the resolution of a man in despair, he precipitately quitted the Venetian territories, and passed into Spain, and obtained a command in one of the provincial armies, war raging in all its horrors.

In the din and noise of battle he expected to drown the thoughts of past events ; when he no longer found that an antidote to his lacerated feeling, he courted death in every onset and in every way.

But it was the pleasure of Him, whose counsels he had rejected, to suffer him still to live on that earth which he had stained with human blood, still to exist to feel the burthen of guilt, and to serve as an example to others.

Peace very soon after succeeded the horrors of war ; this was an additional blow to the feelings of Antonio.

What he had forgotten during his

occupation, now recurred to him with double force.

Every person, every scene, tended to remind him of his villainous behaviour.

Detesting life, yet destitute of courage to end it, he wandered a wretched outcast from society, and its cheering comforts.

Friendless and forsaken, he appeared as one belonging not to this world.

Without home, without a companion to soothe his troubled mind, he sought every gloomy solitude, there to repine over his fallen nature.

Dreadful, indeed, was the agony under which he laboured, how many times did he curse that heart which has been the cause of that baneful error.

Peace of mind was to him utterly lost; the image of his murdered wife was constantly present to his distracted imagination.

How often did he curse the hour when he sacrificed, in a moment of rage, his innocent and affectionate wife.

Then at night, when he retired to seek repose from the gnawing thoughts that preyed upon his mind! Who can picture the horror of his situation?

His wife and her faithful attendant were ever before his eyes, and seemed to scream in his ears "Never wilt thou know peace more!" The murderer in *vain* seeks repose! The injured spirits of thy murdered wife and faithful servant cry aloud for vengeance on thee!

"Never will they cease to torment thee, while thou art an inhabitant of this world! And when it shall please the great director of all things to summon thee before his just tribunal, to answer for thy heinous crimes, what can'st thou say to justify a murderer!"

Then would he start from his bed while the big drops chased each other down his ashy cheek, and exclaim,

“ Would no one, Dear Amelia, when the murderous steel was within my grasp, stretch out their arm to save thee?

“ Yes, thy faithful attendant! (who lost her life in a vain struggle for her mistress). She it was who endeavoured to dissuade me from my bloody purpose, but passion was predominant, and reason dead within me, and in that moment I committed a deed which has embittered my wretched existence, and leaves me no hopes of happiness, but the silent grave!

“ Oh, my dear Amelia! My once loved wife! If, indeed, thy spirit hovers near me, pity and forgive my

crimes. Let me have the consolation of knowing that thou forgivest me, and by that assurance sweeten the bitter cup of death, that I feel is fast approaching.

“ I cannot pray—I cannot pray to that heaven for mercy, against whom I have so sinned.”

With these and the like expressions would the wretched Antonio pass the night. Sleep was a stranger to him. And oft would he court in vain that soothing deity on his bed of down, which the happy peasant enjoyed on his pallet of straw.

Never, till now, did he see his iniquity in its true light—the bustle of war had served for a time to

silence that inward monitor conscience, only now to make it return with tenfold vigour.

Throughout the wide expanse of the earth, not one corner yielded him comfort: he travelled into all countries, and entered into every dissipation, to drown recollection; but the necessary intervals of reason were more dreadful, than the thoughts of eternity.

Gaming, drunkenness, and every other species of debauchery, were used by him as an antidote, but they were fruitless, they were unable to annihilate the recollection of murder.

How many times did he call upon death to end his woes! How often

did he wish to be deprived of reason?

Being unable to calm his agitation by variety of scenes, he returned to Spain.

Passing through the Sierra Morena, he was attacked by a banditti that infested that place. He for some time kept them at bay with his sword, and made a spirited and desperate resistance, in the hopes of their speedily dispatching him, but it was not their intention.

They had observed his dejected manner of travelling, and they wisely judged that a man thus situated, would not not hesitate to enter their

band, and with gladness follow their profession.

His life, not being their intention to take, they disarmed him and carried him to their cave.

In consequence of his refractory behaviour, they were compelled, for some time to confine him; in a short time he was brought before their captain.

The captain surveyed him with a look of approbation, and consented to release him from his confinement, on condition of his immediately joining their gang.

The wretched Antonio with downcast eye, and averted face, replied not.

The ferocious captain highly enraged at this contemptuous behaviour, ordered him for instant death.

Antonio was dragged away by a party of the gang, to put the captain's orders into execution.

The wretched Antonio thought that his miseries now would have an end—Death was what he for a long time had prayed, and he inwardly thanked the ferocious captain; as death to him was mercy.

The captain, in the mean time, pondered on what had passed. He reflected that the numbers of his gang should rather be increased than diminished, and that if An-

tonio could be persuaded to join them, it could not fail to benefit them, as the captain was highly prepossessed in his favour.

He therefore dispatched a messenger, requesting Antonio to be immediately brought before him. Antonio soon after entered with a firm undaunted air.

“ I cannot account for the stubbornness of thy nature,” said the captain, with a haughty air, “ thou seemest to court death, even though we invite you to join in our mirth and pleasures.

“ There must be some horrid mystery attached to thy fate, which I suppose it is in vain to request thee to develope.

“ We seek not to know the history of thy life—all we request of thee, is immediately to join us, and we will endeavour to make you happy.”

The captain ceased to speak, and waited impatiently for the answer of Antonio.

The rest of the gang stared at each other with great astonishment, at beholding the condescension of their captain.

Antonio maintained an obstinate silence to all their questions. This conduct highly incensed their leader, who would have immediately sacrificed him to his rage, had not an idea crossed his mind, that this obstinacy would gra-

dually wear away, and that he should still have him enrolled among himself and friends.

The captain, therefore, with a voice that spoke the contending emotion of his soul, remanded him back to his late confinement.

There was more lenity in this treatment than Antonio had expected. He had wished for nought but death at their hands—death to him would have been mercy; but that mercy was denied him.

But sorrow and confinement in their dreary dungeon was ill calculated to soothe the anguish of his lacerated heart.

The image of his murdered Amelia was constantly flitting before his eyes, and in one of those moments when that silent, but never ceasing monster, conscience, had reduced him to the brink of despair, he determined to accept the offer of the captain, thinking even that situation was far preferable to the horrors he now experienced.

When, therefore, he was next brought before the leader, he complied with the commands of the assembly, and enrolled himself a member of a company of banditti; taking the usual oath, he was immediately sent out with a party on the look out.

In the course of his excursions, he always signalized himself in every en-

counter, by a careless and desperate courage.

Through his means, the strength of the banditti was raised to double the number it was, when he entered. The wealth of it was also increased to an inestimable value.

But this was of short duration, the court of Madrid had been incessantly importuned to send troops against them, till they were compelled to dopt the measures so much sought for.

Various small parties were sent out to disperse them, but these being insufficient, they were destroyed ere the thought of an enemy was entertained.

The destruction of their troops, induced the march of a whole army towards the place of their comrades death. They entered into the mountains, but not without seeking to bar off communication with a large party on the plains without.

The advanced guard penetrated into the very heart of the Sierra Morena, but no vestige of an enemy was to be heard. Every thing carried with it the air of the greatest tranquillity.

Night coming on, they were under the necessity of making fires to mark the situation of the different communicating posts.

About midnight, when those that had been released from duty, were

reposing on their arms, they were alarmed with the sudden report of cannon and carbines.

Starting from their rest, they listened in awful expectation of being attacked in the gloom of midnight.

In about an hour every thing was still. Supposing it to have been but a false alarm, they composed themselves again to rest.

They had lain but a few seconds, when they were saluted with a shower of balls from above, and in the next moment, they were charged by a party of the freebooters that had lain in ambush.

Numbers continually pouring upon

them, compelled them, though reluctantly, to give way, after losing many of their fellow soldiers, and retreat to the next post. These with themselves were attacked and driven away.

Every successive post was thus compelled to retreat, until they were up with the body stationed on the plain.

The engagement now raged in every part with dreadful fury. On the mountains, and in the valleys, as well as in the plains, the flashes of powder, and the report of guns, told too well that the work of death was begun.

The superior order of the soldiers at length proved too great for a lawless untutored banditti; and the day dawned on the discomfiture of those bloody men.

The sun rose in majestic splendour, to shew the havoc made by the contending parties.

The plain was covering with the dead and dying; trees torn from the roots by the balls of the foe, and huge masses of rock were strewed about.

Very few of the banditti escaped. Antonio, who but a week before had been elected their commander, on the death of him by whom they had been led to plunder, was taken after making a most obstinate resistance, and being severely wounded.

He, with the other prisoners, were conducted in chains to Madrid amidst the scoffs and reviling of an exulting soldiery.

The wounds of Antonio were such as to induce the attending Surgeon to declare mortal.

When the wretched man was made acquainted with the opinion of the surgeon, the anguish of his wounds, what before had superseded his mental sufferings, now gave way to the cries of conscience.

With a shriek of horror he tore the bandages from the wounds, and let forth the stream of life.

Assistance being called, they were again dressed and fastened with additional precaution, to prevent the effect of the struggles of despair.

A delirious fever was the conse-

quence of the united agonies. With horrid imprecations on his head, he would often start from his bed, and gaze around with such a writhing look as scared the attendants; they were compelled to leave the room, they could not withstand the emotions that they caused.

The agonized Antonio now suffered as much as man could well suffer in this world, from the united mental and bodily wounds.

The words which he uttered in his frenzy, fully made known the dreadful purport of them.

The last night of his existence was particularly severe.

A confessor had been with him the whole day; he had confessed him; and had drawn from him the whole transactions of his life.

When Antonio came to that part, where he related the murder of his wife and servant, the simple monk started in horror at the relation: he crossed himself devoutly, and cast his eyes fearfully around, expected instantaneously to be witness to some mark of divine vengeance.

In a few minutes he so far recovered himself as to be able to bid Antonio proceed in his narrative.

Having finished, he desired the wretched object to compose himself to.

prayer, as the surest means to obtain forgiveness of the past.

But at the mention of prayer, the sufferer started from his bed, with a wild frantic countenance that fully portrayed the workings of his mind. The pious monk said every thing that his holy function suggested to calm the agitated frame of the dying Antonio, and continued:

“ If, my son, you hope for forgiveness in the next world, it can only be obtained by a sincere repentance in this.

“ Your crimes have been great, but we will presume to hope, that mercy will be extended to you by that power, who alone can pardon you.”

The good father then, with a devoutness of soul that gave additional piety to his words, uttered a prayer for the repose of the soul of the wretched Antonio.

But he seemed to disdain the holy offices of the monk, and exclaimed,

“ Prayer, father, for such a wretch as I?—an outcast of Heaven—a murderer—a vile, dreadful murderer—no, no, no—Heaven in all its vengeance will hurl me into the deepest abyss of misery and wretchedness!—Never—never—oh! never shall the foul deed be quenched!

“ Who will pardon the murderer of an innocent—pure and innocent woman?—Wretch that I am, to commit

so black a crime—a crime that weighs my soul with the deepest horror and remorse!”

Here the father attempted to put a stop to his despairing accents; but it was now too late—delirium, the consequence of despair, had taken possession of his brain, and he now raved with the utmost fury.

“ Ah! what art thou!—Devils, take her away!—She will kill me.—Ah! my wife!—I did not murder thee!—Ah! sayest thou so?—then indeed it is too true!—Murder! hell! take her away!—Her eyes are basilisks!—Her form scorches me!—Devils!—devils! Oh! Oh! Oh!—

“Gone!—then it was but a dream!
No! no! no!—True—too true!—Oh!
my soul—my soul!—There again!—
See! blood! blood! how it flows!—
The wound—the dagger—yes—yes—
it was too sure!—Ah! she stabs me!
She has killed me!—See! see! see!”

With this he tore off the bandage,
and in spite of the exertions of the at-
tendants to the contrary, he forced his
way into the gallery, and rushed down
the stairs into a court-yard.

This was but the fury of a dying
gasp; he had scarcely entered ere
he dropt down lifeless, and being
brought up stairs, in a few moments
after expired.

Thus ended the life of the criminal Antonio; who mistaking the paths of rectitude, wandered into those of vice, and fell.

A sad and awful example of the deceitfulness of the human heart.

Who, neglecting to curb in time the sallies of an unbounded passion, stopt not until he had completed it in murder!

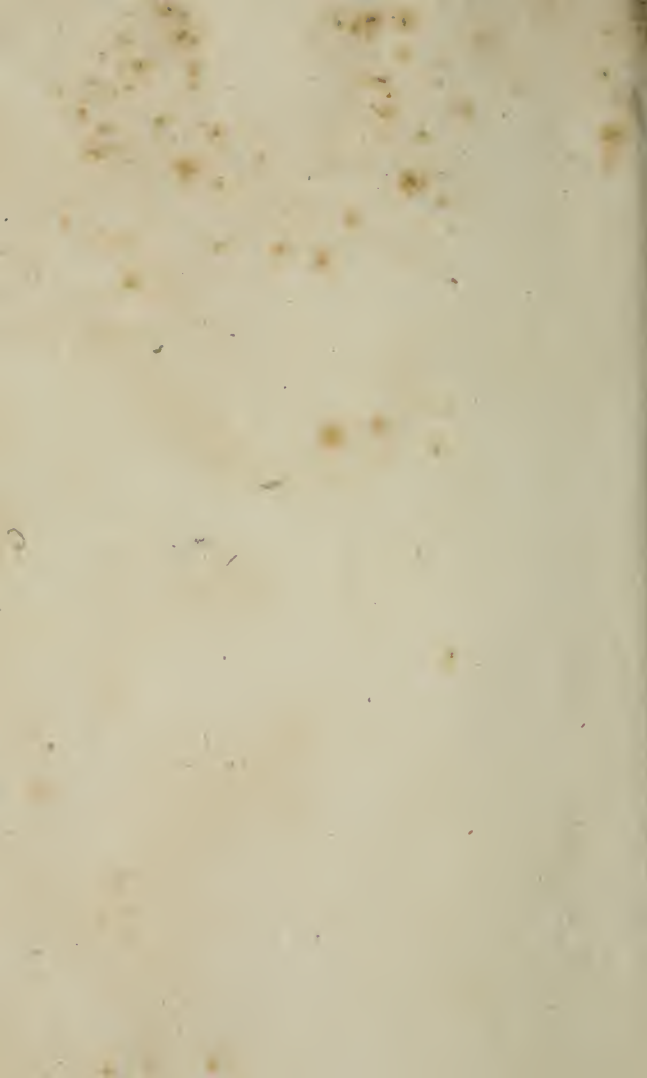
Whoever reads this tale 'tis hoped, it will prove some warning to those who are not aware how far they may be led, ere they find themselves entering into the wilds of viciousness, and the paths of sin.

Who, from committing trivial faults, are imperceptibly led on to the commission of greater; and whose end might prove a counterpart of the "PIEDMONTESE."

THE END.

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